Counterinsurgency in Iraq: Theory and Practice, 2007

David Kilcullen

Purpose and Scope

- Share some basic observations on counterinsurgency theory and practice, derived primarily from service in Iraq (2006 and 2007), Afghanistan (2006), and pre 9/11 campaigns in Southeast Asia and the Pacific
- Open a discussion on issues relevant to you

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Caveat: the logic of field observation in Iraq

+ Everyone sees Iraq differently, depending on when they served there, what they did, and where they worked.
  - The environment is highly complex, ambiguous and fluid
  - It is extremely hard to know what is happening – trying too hard to find out can get you killed…and so can not knowing
  - “Observer effect” and data corruption create uncertainty, and invite bias
  - Knowledge of Iraq is very time-specific and location-specific
  - Prediction in complex systems (like insurgencies) is mathematically impossible…but we can’t help ourselves, we do it anyway
+ Hence, observations from one time/place may **or may not** be applicable elsewhere, even in the same campaign in the same year: we must first understand the essentials of the environment, then determine whether analogous situations exist, before attempting to apply “lessons”.

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My role in Iraq (hence, my bias)

+ Senior counterinsurgency advisor to the Commanding General MNF-I (David Petraeus)

+ Design of the 2007-2008 campaign plan and counterinsurgency policy, including field ops research studies

+ Field counterinsurgency support to the:
  - Multi-National Force
  - U.S. Mission (Embassy, AID mission, Office of Regional Affairs)
  - Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams
  - Iraqi government (civil, military, police)

+ Raising, vetting and employing tribal irregular forces

+ Approx. 65% field-deployed, 35% headquarters/embassy

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Definitions (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5)

Insurgency: an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict…an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.

Counterinsurgency: military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency. Political power is the central issue in

There are no fixed, standard operational techniques in COIN.

It is a form of "**counter-warfare**" that morphs in response to changes in the character of an insurrection.

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Basic Insurgent Tactics (PIPE)

+ Provocation
  - Carry out atrocities that prompt opponents (counterinsurgents, government or sectarian opponents) to react violently, in ways counter to their interests

+ Intimidation
  - Terrify and coerce members of the insurgent's own community who cooperate with, or support the government
  - Terrify and coerce members of the security forces and civil administration

+ Protraction
  - Draw out the conflict to avoid strong counterinsurgent forces, control own loss rates, enhance the exhaustion effect and preserve strength after setbacks

+ Exhaustion
  - Soak up counterinsurgent forces and government agencies in actions that require major effort but do not advance their mission (e.g. garrison, guard, convoy or FOB tasks)

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Provocation

AQI bombing, Kirkuk Girls' Primary School, 2 April 2007

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Intimidation

Mayor and City Council Chairman, Suleiman Beg district, 10 April 2007

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Protraction

Mission Integration challenge:

4 x U.S. brigade combat teams
4 x Iraqi Army brigades
16 x Iraqi police units
2 x Iraqi national police brigades
Predator
Shadow
AC-130
4 x RAID towers
Combat Aviation Regiment
Attack Aviation Regiment
Special Forces ODAs
7 x intelligence agencies
18 x sensor feeds

Day 7 of Dustwun Search Operation, Yusufiya, 19 May 2007

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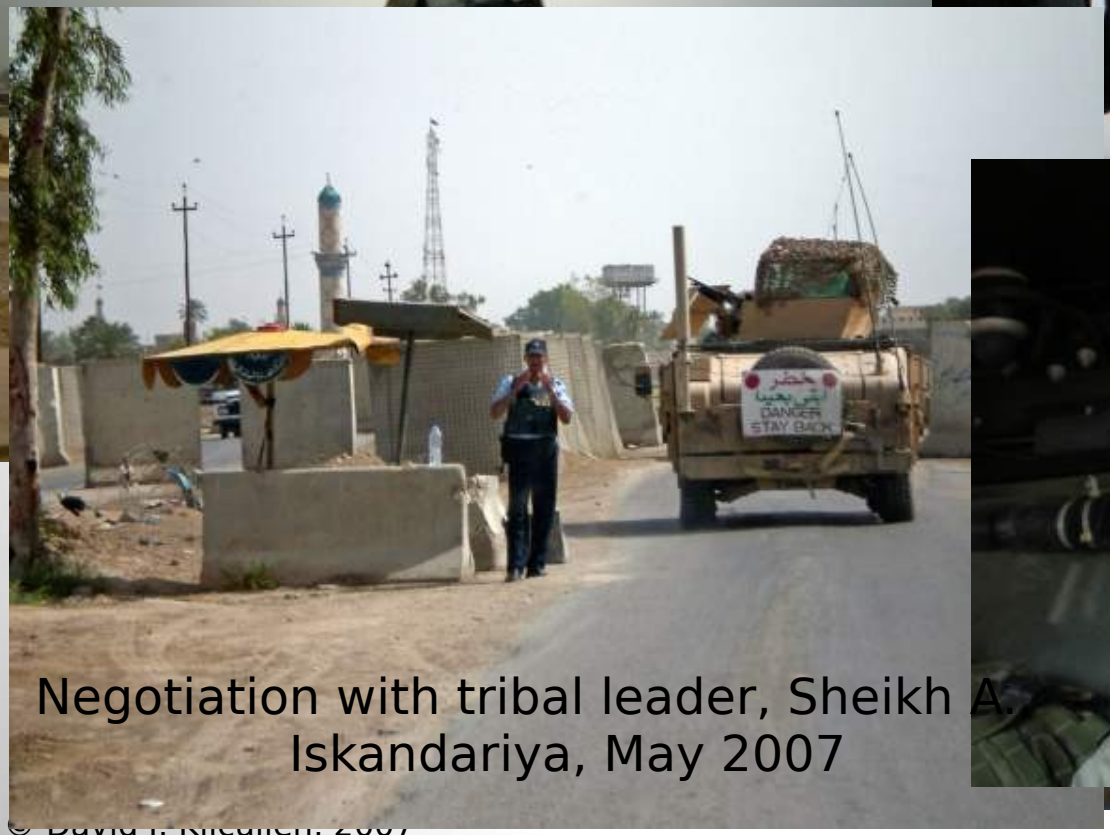
Exhaustion

(simple meeting, multiple transit and force protection requirements over 36 hours)



Negotiation with tribal leader, Sheikh A.
Iskandariya, May 2007

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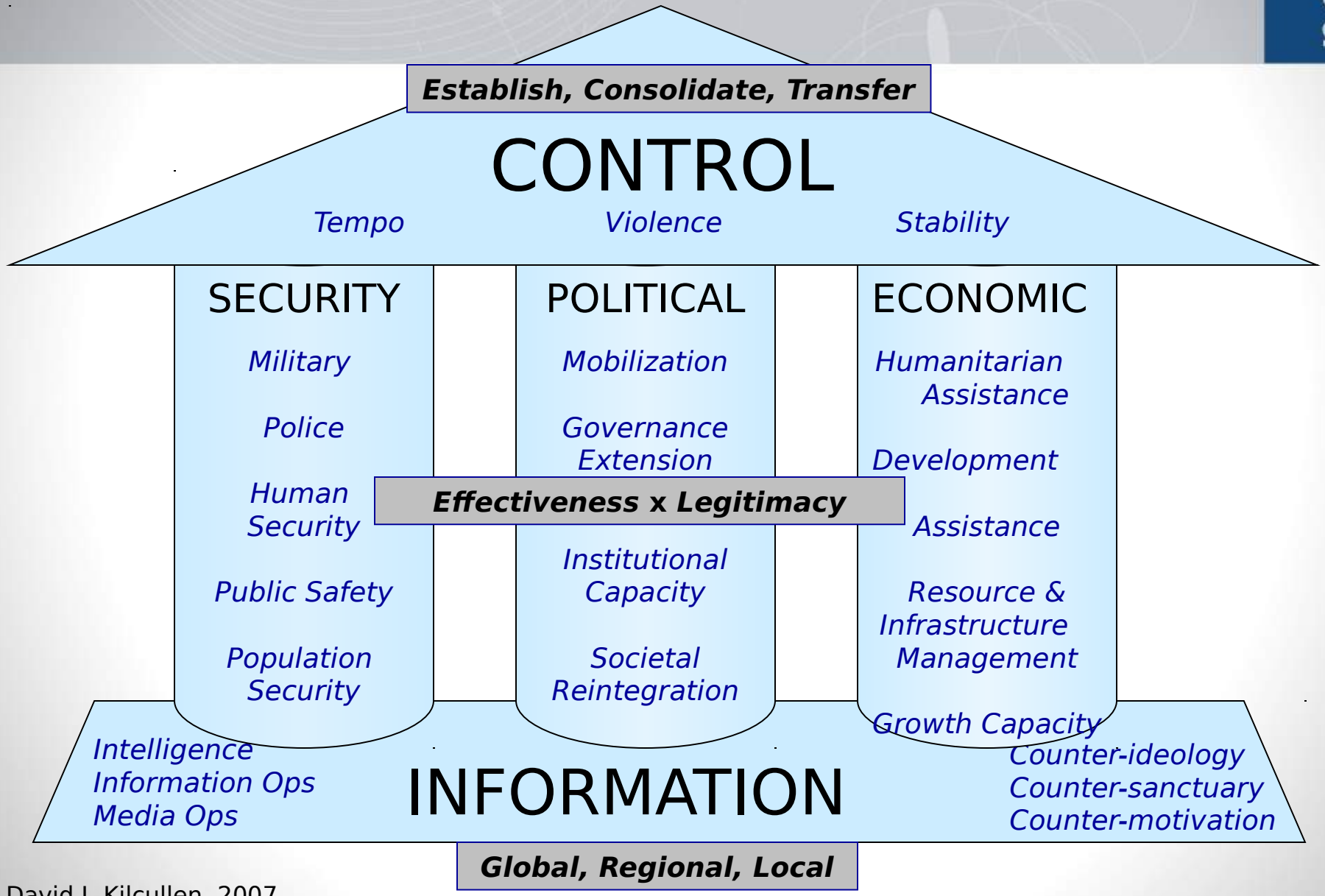
Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency



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The environment

- Think of the environment as a sort of "conflict ecosystem":
  - Multiple independent but interlinked actors
  - Each seeks to maximize their own survivability and advantage
  - Actors are pre-existing, and (in normal times) collaborative or competitive: but are now combative and destructive
  - We are not outside this ecosystem, but rather one of the players in it
  - Our intent is to control the system's destructive, combative elements and return it to its "normal" state

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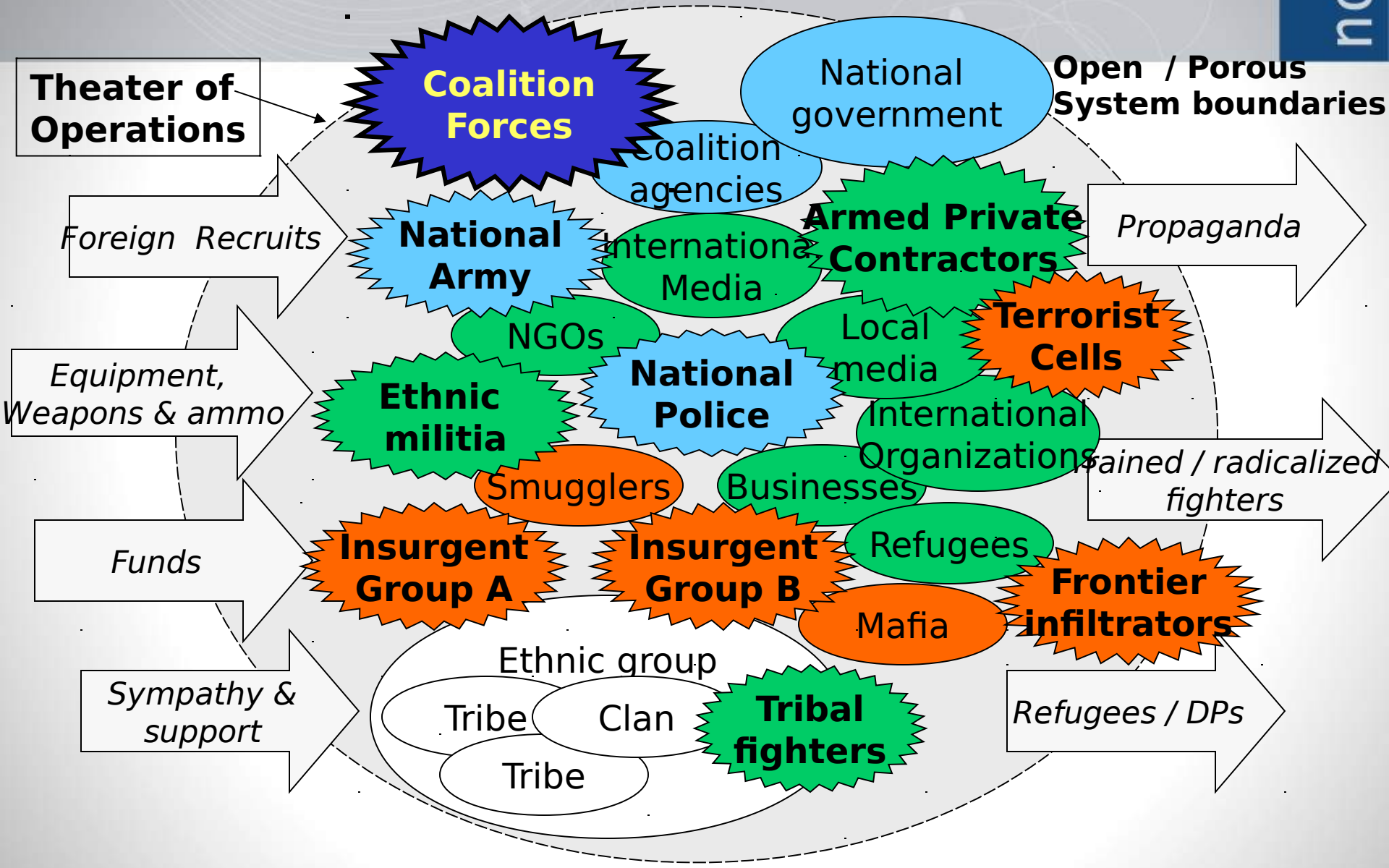
The Conflict Ecosystem



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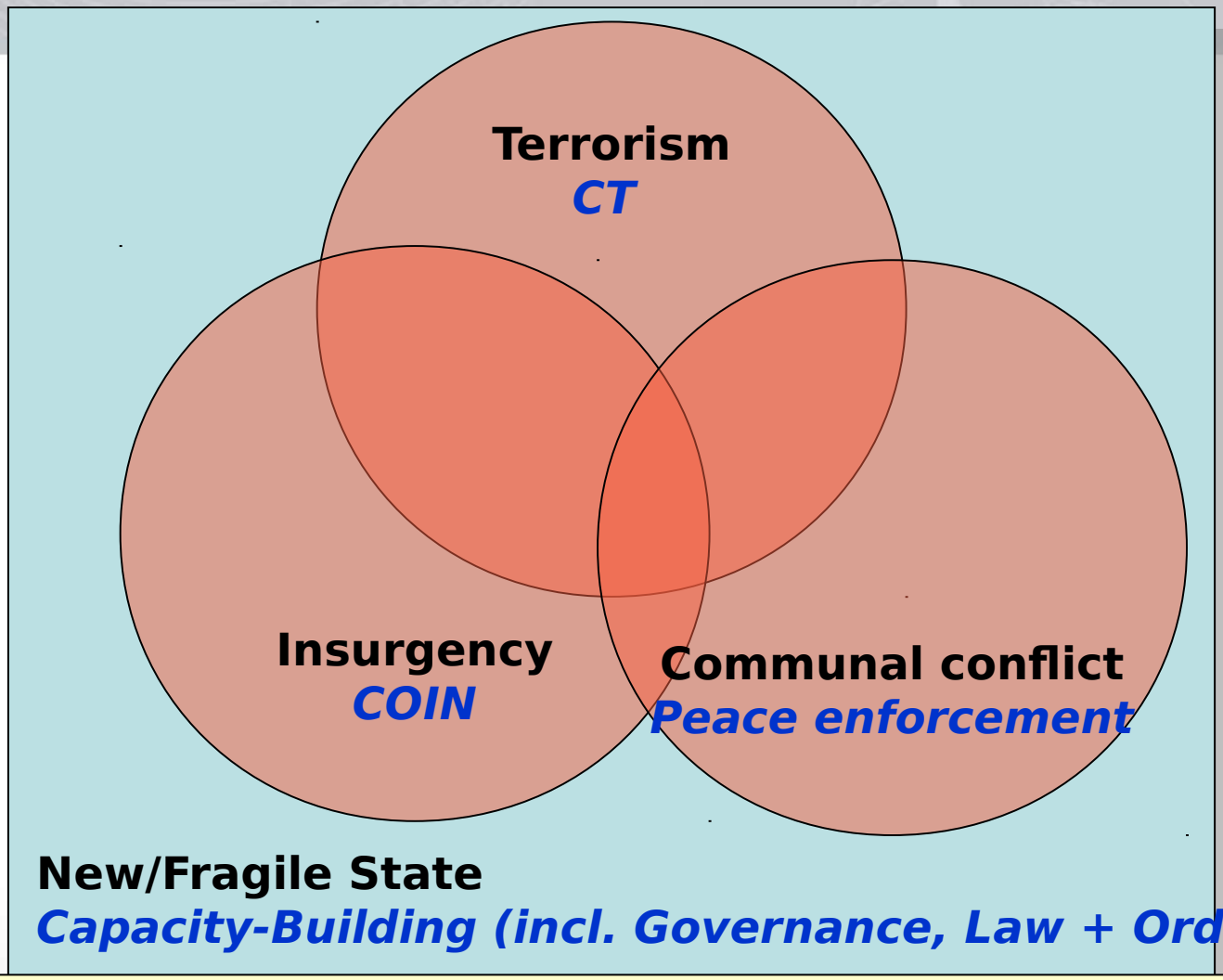
Iraq as a four-problem set



The fundamental problem is CONTROL – of people, terrain and information.

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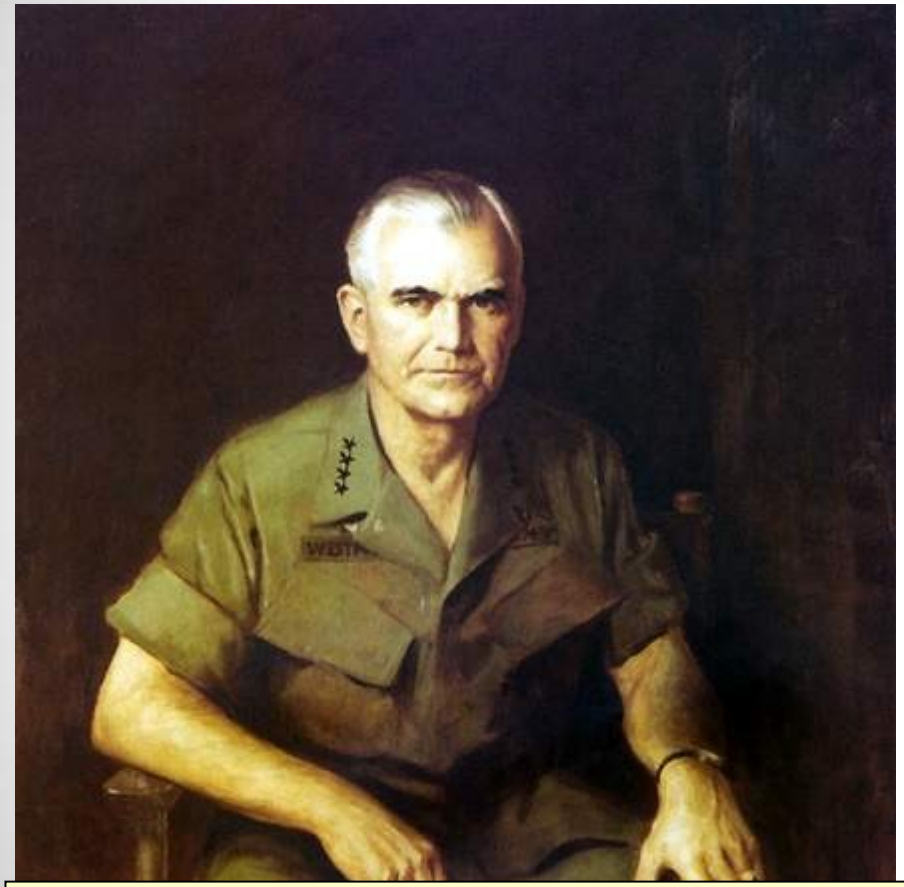
“Getting it” is not enough



“[This] is a political as well as a military war…the ultimate goal is to regain the loyalty and cooperation of the people.”

“It is abundantly clear that all political, military, economic and security (police) programs must be integrated in order to attain any kind of success”

Gen **William C. Westmoreland**, COMUSMACV
MACV Directive 525-4, 7 September 1965

Understanding by leaders is not enough:
everyone needs to understand, and we need a framework, doctrine, a system, processes and structures to **enact** this understanding.

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U.S. “Institutional Constraints” in Vietnam (Komer, 1972)

1. Repeatedly underestimating enemy resilience and capacity to adapt/recover
2. Incremental response – minimum necessary at each stage, short-term approach
3. US could not substitute for lack of institutional capacity & political support on part of GVN
4. A discontinuity between theory and practice - COIN strategy versus conventional ops
5. A high degree of mirror-imaging - molding of ARVN/GVN in U.S. image
6. Intel saw enemy in our image, focused on factors that would have mattered to us but did not matter to the enemy
7. Civilian agencies focused on most familiar aspects of situation
8. Institutional inertia / reluctance & slowness to adapt
9. Lack of institutional memory because of short tours (“one year nine times”)
10. Reluctance of organizations to critically examine own performance
11. “Business as Usual” approach
12. Lack of integrated conflict management (USG/GVN) to unify effort
13. Proliferation of overlapping programs
14. Counterinsurgency was everybody’s business and nobody’s
15. Lack of inter-agency command/management machinery
16. Counterinsurgency approach applied too little and too late

Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy does its thing: institutional constraints on U.S.-GVN performance in Vietnam,* RAND, 1972 pp. v-xiii

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The Political Dimension of Counterinsurgency

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Politics, broadly defined

+ Aristotle's $\pi o \lambda \iota \tau \varepsilon \alpha$ – power and authority relationships & institutions in human groups
+ Not just about state-based legislative or electoral frameworks; civil society is also key, especially in weak states or where *state*, *nation* and *territory* don't overlap
+ Dimensions of politics (each is a spectrum):
  - **Formality** (formal/informal)
  - **Focus** (internal/external)
  - **Force** (persuasive/coercive)
  - **Responsiveness** (democracy/autocracy)
  - **Cohesion** (integration/disintegration
  - **Stability** (fragility/resilience)

(not an exhaustive list, just dimensions most relevant to COIN)

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Politics during insurgency

+ Power flows:
  - Away from formal towards informal structures
  - Away from central towards local institutions
  - Away from unarmed towards armed entities
  - Away from more recent identities to older identities
+ Polarization to extremes – the “empty middle”
+ Competition for mobilization of popular support
+ Competition for governance (effectiveness x legitimacy)
+ Competition between disorder/chaos (insurgent)

Control over the population (through a combination of **coercion** and **consent**) is the goal of both government and insurgent – “The Population is the Prize” (FM 3-24 / Galula)

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Iraqi politics in 2007

+ Tribal, clan, family power structures
+ Ethnic and religious identity politics
+ Disconnected political elites (list system, IZ)
+ Religious political parties
+ Terrorism, insurgency, tribal warfare and "armed propaganda"
+ Old oligarchy/*ancien regime*
+ Government formation process
+ Pseudo-state criminal networks
+ Military politics (coup pre-cursor conditions?)
+ External actors (coalition, AQ, Iran, Arab states, Turkey, UN, global media)

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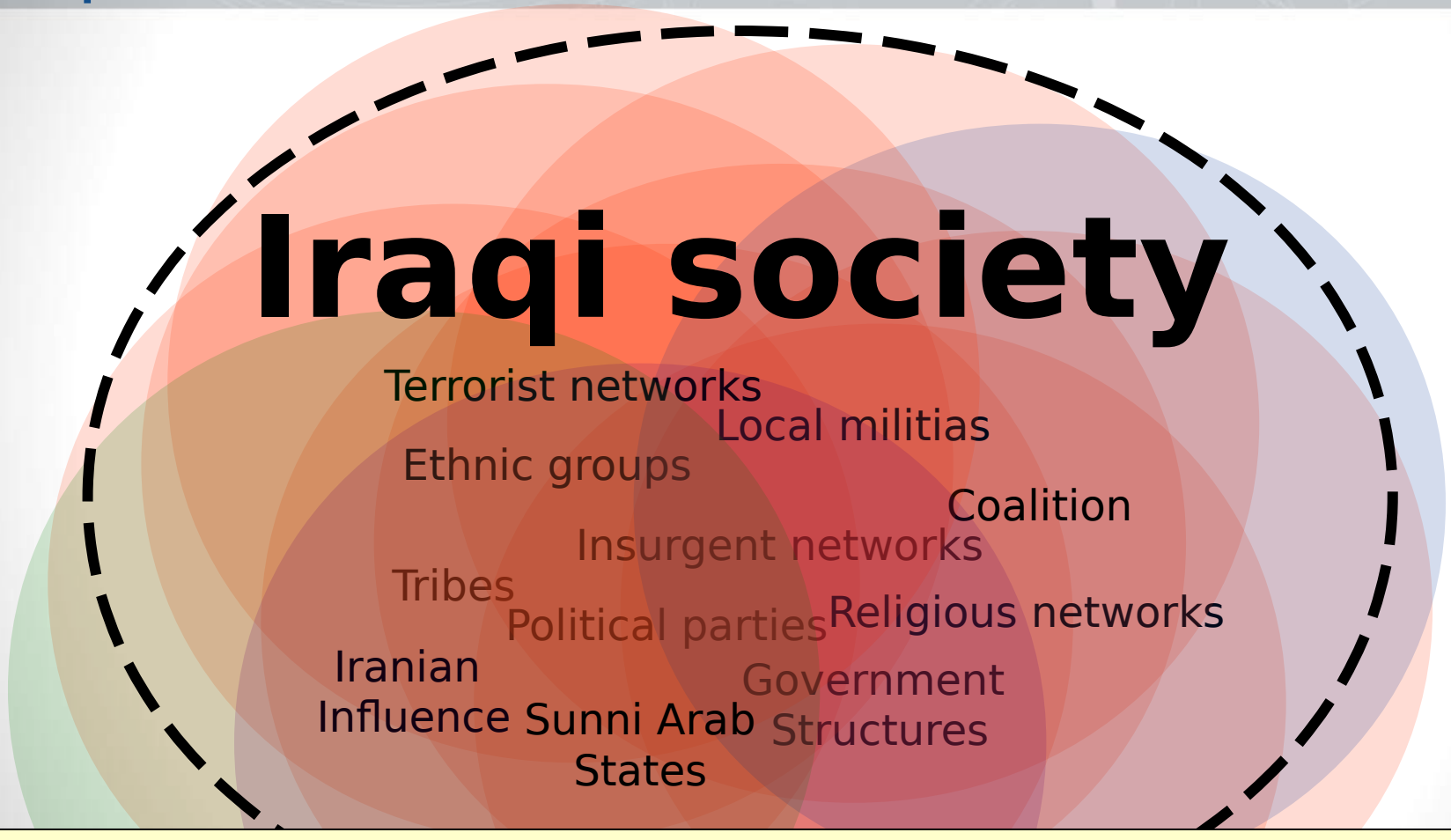
Iraqi politics as a system of competing spheres of influence



A system of constantly shifting tactical alliances of convenience, in which competing elites seek to mobilize a population base, in order to prevail in a violent, internally focused struggle for formal and informal political power.

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Political “cycles” in the Iraq war to date

+ Cycle of violence
  - state weakness, enables
  - terrorism, which provokes
  - sectarian backlash, further weakening the State
+ Cycle of hope and disappointment
  - new initiatives or personnel, create
  - raised (then unmet) expectations, which provoke
  - Cynicism toward new initiatives and personnel
+ “Kiss of Death” syndrome
  - We “surge” into areas and introduce civil programs, which
  - Exposes moderates and cooperative leaders to insurgents
  - Then security improves, we reduce our presence in that district,
  - Then insurgents kill those who cooperated with us

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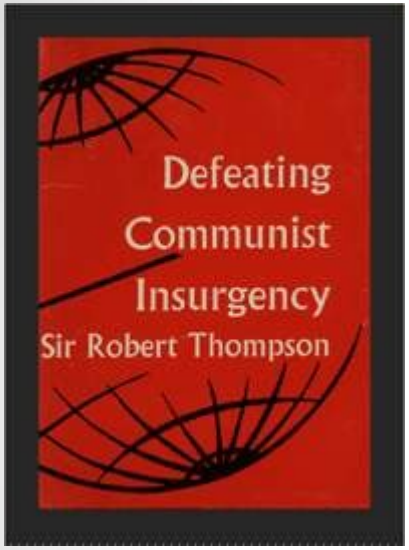
Rule of Law as a political weapon



Robert S. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* 1966, pp. 52-54

"Functioning in accordance with the law is a very small price to pay in return for the advantage of being the government. There is nothing to prevent a government enacting very tough laws to cope with the situation…

"If the government does not adhere to the law, then it loses respect and fails to fulfill its contractual obligation to the people as a government.

"This leads to the situation in which officers and officials cease to be responsible for their actions, with the result that, instead of an insurgency, there is to all intents and purposes a civil war in the country, in which neither side can claim to be the government.

"In such circumstances there is such little difference between the two sides that the people have no reason for choosing to support the government."

Rule of Law is fundamental to government legitimacy. Incidents like Abu Ghraib, escalation of force, wrongful arrest or catch-and-release all directly undermine our political position

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Narrative as a weapon

- People are not mobilized individually, by cold consideration of rational facts
- They are mobilized in groups, by influencers and opinion leaders, through *cultural narratives* that include 7 basic elements:

1. A simple, easily expressed story or explanation for events
2. A choice of words and story format that resonates with the target group
3. Symbolic imagery that creates an emotional bond (ideally at the unconscious level)
4. Elements of Myth ("sacred story") that tap into deep cultural undercurrents of identity and appeal to universal ideals
5. A basis in, or a call to action (ideally, action that lies within the immediate capacity of the listeners)
6. Credibility built on a high degree of consistency between what is said, what is done, and what is seen
7. A future focus that inspires people to mortgage current self-interest for future benefits

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Galula's 80/20 rule

Essential though it is, **the military action is secondary to the political one, its primary purpose being to afford the political power enough freedom to work safely with the population**. The armed forces are but one of the many instruments of the counterinsurgent, and what is better than the political power to harness the nonmilitary instruments, to see that appropriations come at the right time to consolidate the military work, that political and social reforms follow through?

"A revolutionary war is **20 per cent military action and 80 per cent political**" is a formula that reflects the truth.

"U.S. spending in Iraq 2003-2006 was 1.4% civilian, 98.6% military"
– Dan Sullivan, Sep 2006

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Statement of the obvious # 1

+ War is armed politics, and COIN is an armed variant of domestic politics in which numerous challengers compete for control over the population.
+ Therefore, there is a fundamental difference between conducting COIN in:
  - your own country
  - a territory you seek to control permanently (e.g. a colony or separatist province)
  - a friendly foreign country, or
  - a hostile or occupied foreign country

The complex interaction between the political characteristics of the insurgent movement, the population, the government, the counterinsurgent, and any external actors, drives the character of a

Governance, development, democracy are not universal goods

“There is no such thing as impartial governance or humanitarian assistance. In this environment, every time you help someone, you hurt someone else.”

General Rupert Smith,

The enemy will perceive actions by political staff, NGOs, economic and development staffs, PRTs and government officials as a direct challenge to grass-roots control over the population, and will react with violence

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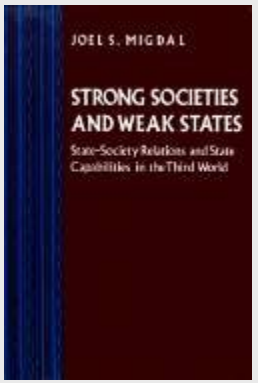
Migdal's State-in-Society framework

+ Comparing insurgents, terrorists, coalition forces and a national government is like comparing apples to oranges – these are *competing* but *unlike* political structures

+ Migdal's focus on the four functions of the State gives a framework for comparing political actors on functional, rather than structural gr
  - Penetrate society
  - Regulate social relationships
  - Extract resources



Reference: *Strong Societies and Weak States,* 1988

This framework can be used to evaluate effectiveness & legitimacy of any political entity (gang, tribe, terrorist movement, government, international organization etc.)

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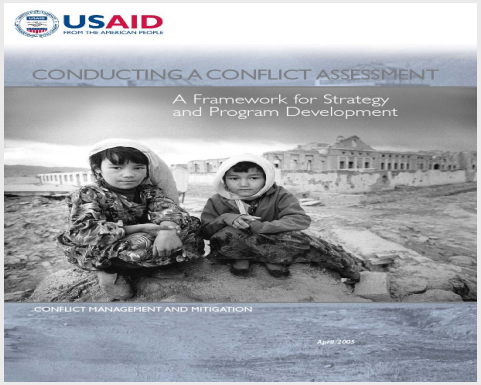
USAID Conflict Assessment Framework

+ Methodology for conducting a team-based interagency field assessment of a conflict, reviewing existing programs and developing new responses. Focuses on five areas:
  - Incentives for violence
  - Access to conflict resources
  - Institutional and social capacity to manage violence
  - Global and regional dynamics and forces
  - Windows of opportunity and

This provides a common framework for initial evaluation of an area (by PRT, embassy, intelligence staff or maneuver commander) and for ongoing assessment.


USAID
CONDUCTING A CONFLICT ASSESSMENT
A Framework for Strategy and Program Development
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION

Reference: USAID *Conducting a Conflict Assessment* 2005

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The Security Dimension of Counterinsurgency

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Components of Security

+ **Military** – local (territorial) forces, regional (framework) forces, strike forces, border protection, theater reserve
+ **Police** – community policing, paramilitary police (constabulary), police intelligence (FBI / Special Branch)
+ **Human security** (individual focus) – economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, political security (UNDP 1994)
+ **Public Safety** (group focus) – emergency services, police, fire, EMS, emergency telephone system, police dispatchers, public prosecutors, etc.
+ **Resource and Population Control** – access controls, neighborhood watch, reporting systems, collective responsibility

Overwhelmingly non-military in nature but in a counterinsurgency environment, effective military security operations are fundamental: they underpin all other forms of security.

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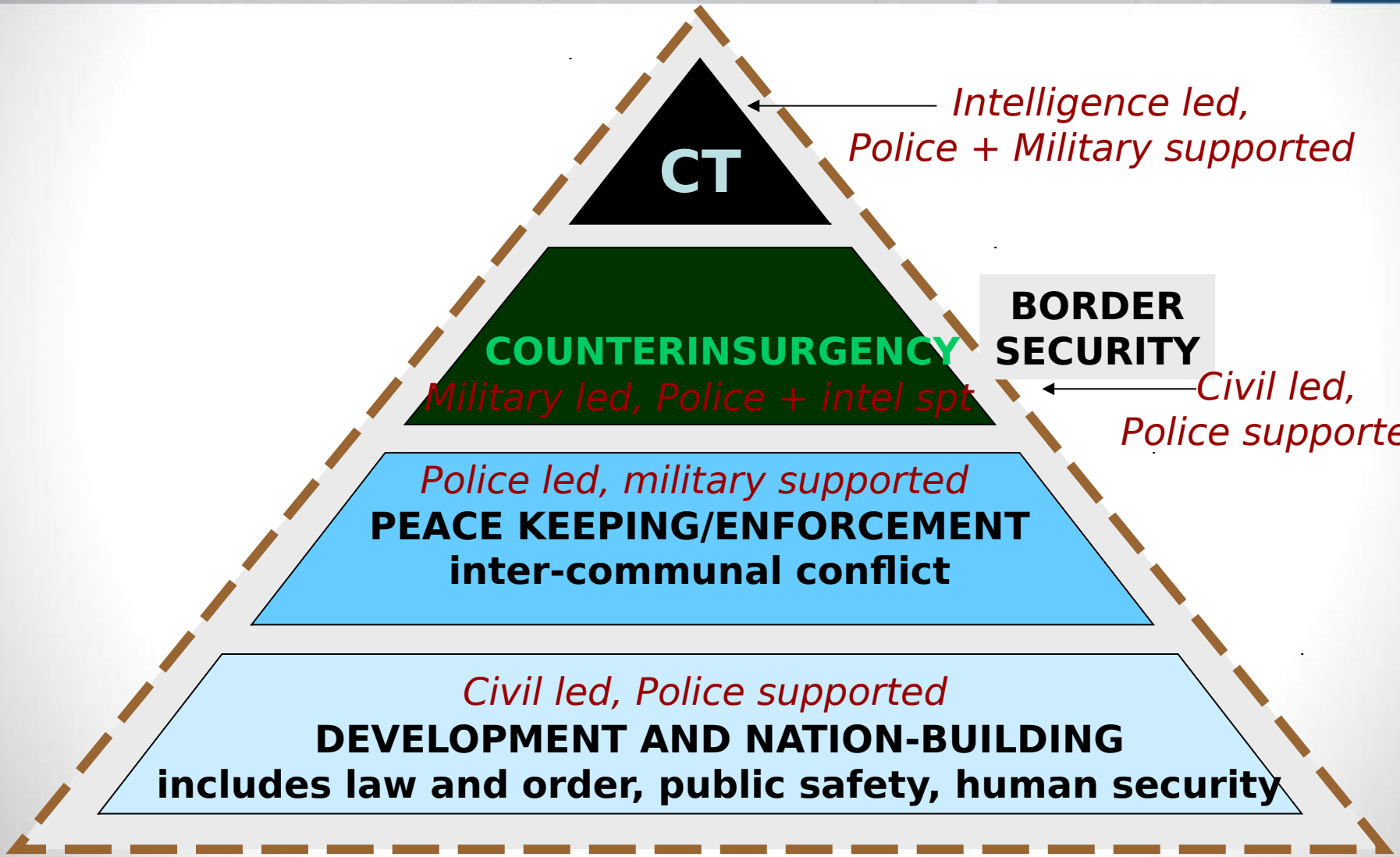
Security components in Iraq 2007



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Three possible approaches to war

- **Terrain-centric** – capture the key terrain, all else will follow ("positional warfare")
- **Enemy-centric** – destroy the enemy's ability or will to fight, all else will follow ("maneuver warfare" - U.S. has a cultural preference for this approach).
- **Population-centric** – control the population, all else will follow.

***Note** – these are not mutually exclusive*

"The Population is the Prize" (FM 3-24 / Galula)
Control over the population is the goal of both government and insurgent – **but the enemy and the terrain still matter.**

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Why counterinsurgency is population-centric

+ This is not about being “nice” to the population, it is a hard-headed recognition of certain basic facts, to wit:
  - The **enemy needs the people to act in certain ways** (sympathy, acquiescence, silence, provocation) -- without this insurgents wither
  - The **enemy is fluid; the population is fixed** – therefore controlling the population is do-able, destroying the enemy is not
  - Being fluid, the **enemy can control his loss rate** and can never be eradicated by purely enemy-centric means (e.g. Vietnam VC losses)
  - In any given area, there are multiple threat groups but only

Terrain-centric and enemy-centric actions are still vital and crucial to success. Enemy and Terrain still matter, but Population is the key.

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The enemy's approach

Bernard B. Fall - Senior COIN Advisor, MACV

Killed Feb 67 on a patrol near Hue, South Vietnam
French Resistance 1942-44
Free French Army 1944-45
Professor, Howard University

"…any sound revolutionary war operator (the French underground, the Norwegian underground, or any other European anti-Nazi underground) used small-war tactics – not to destroy the German Army, of which they were thoroughly incapable, but to establish a competitive system of control over the population. To do this…they had to kill some of the occupying forces and attack some of the military targets. But above all they had to kill their own people who collaborated with the enemy".

Bernard Fall, "The theory and practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency", *Naval War College Review*, April 1965

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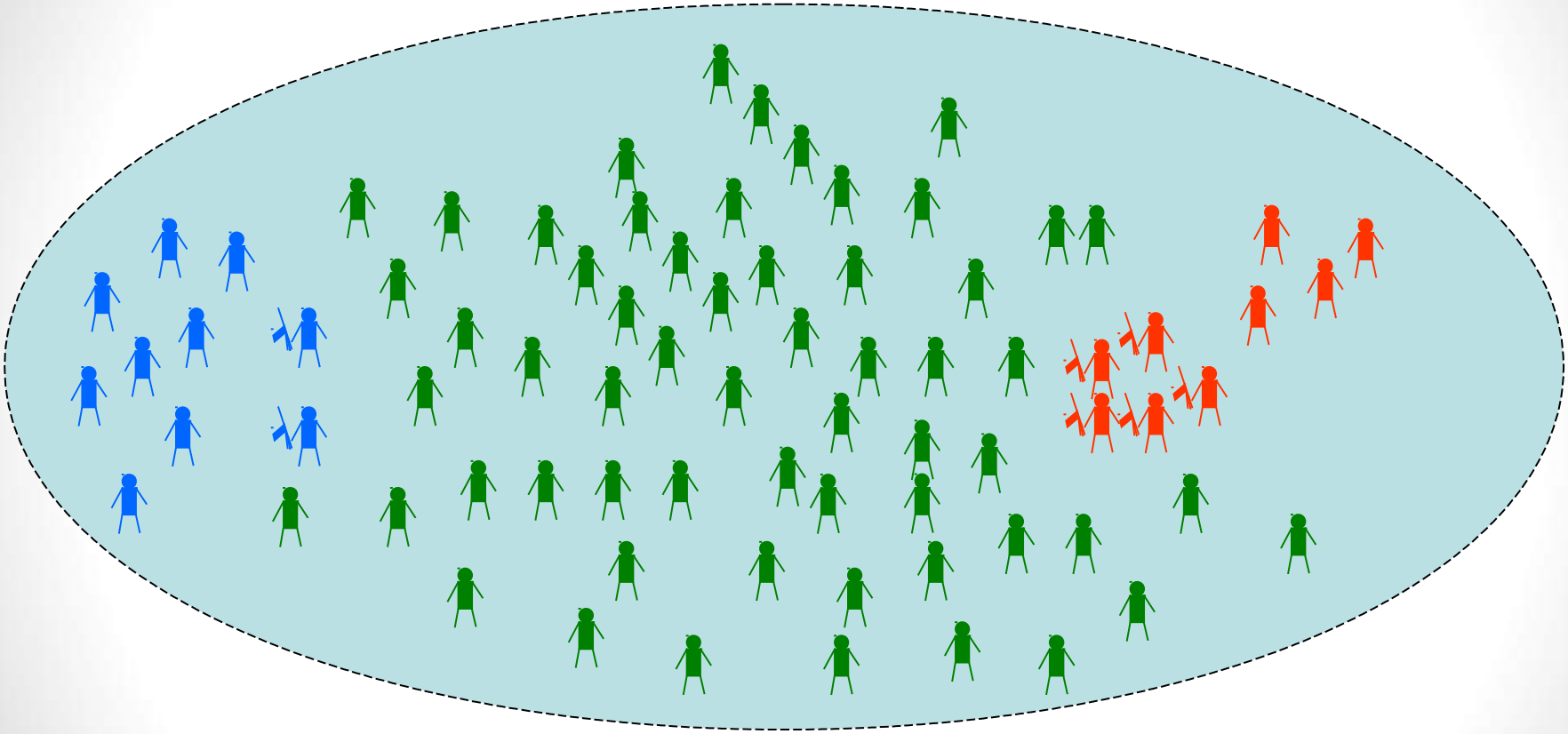
“Competitive Control” 1
(start state)



Start State: Minority supports government, minority supports insurgency, majority are undecided / unaffiliated. Insurgents introduce armed organization in order to expand control.

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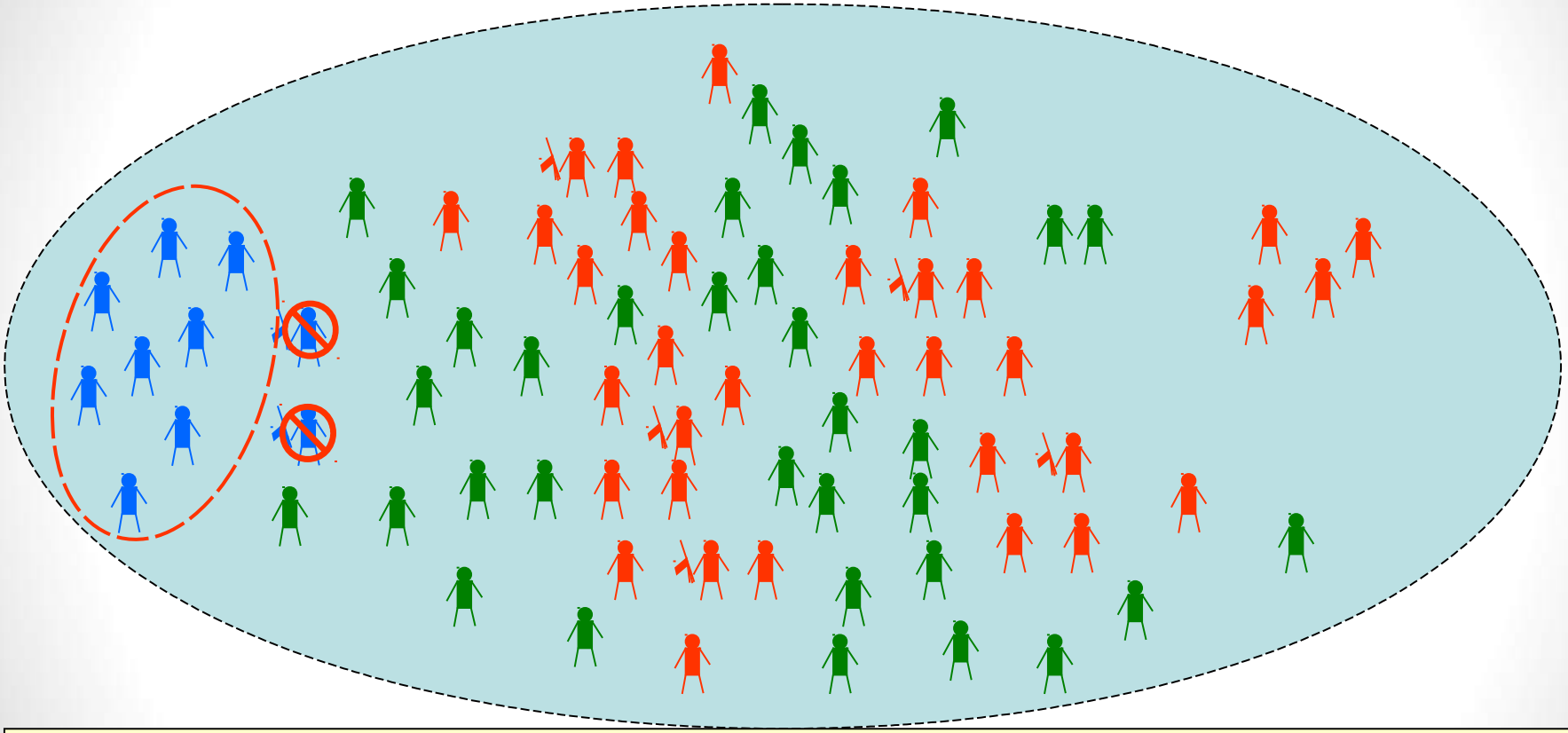
“Competitive Control” 2
(insurgent “control offensive”)



Insurgent “control offensive”: armed organization [plus political cells] spread control (persuasion, intimidation). Insurgents target armed pro-government civilians, eliminate intimidate remainder. Note that the population is won over in “clusters” around social/opinion leaders, not on an individual basis.

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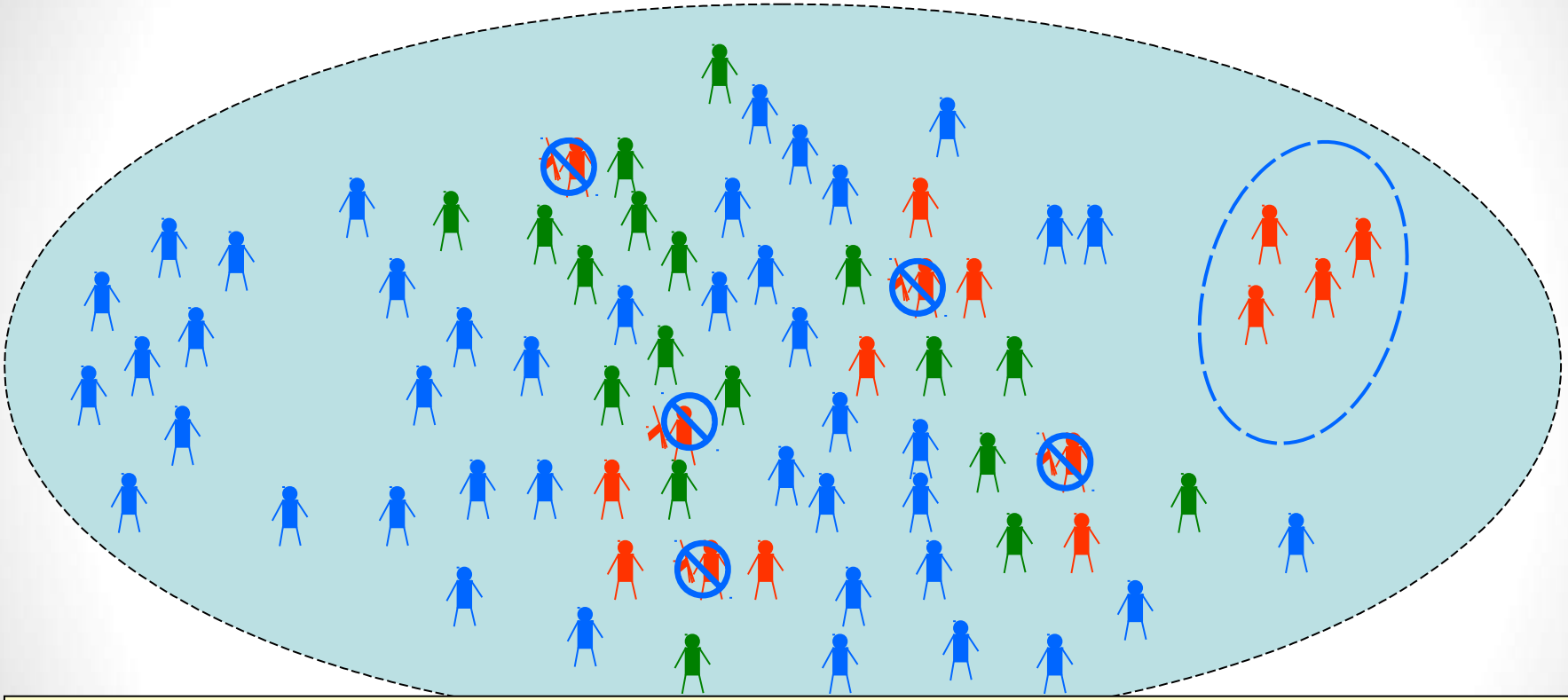
“Competitive Control” 3
(Security Force “control operations”)



<u>Security Force “control operations”</u>: SF finds the pro-government population (they will initially be difficult to identify), protects them, wins neutrals to government side then eliminates armed insurgent cells and neutralizes insurgent supporters. **Some insurgent political cells remain**.

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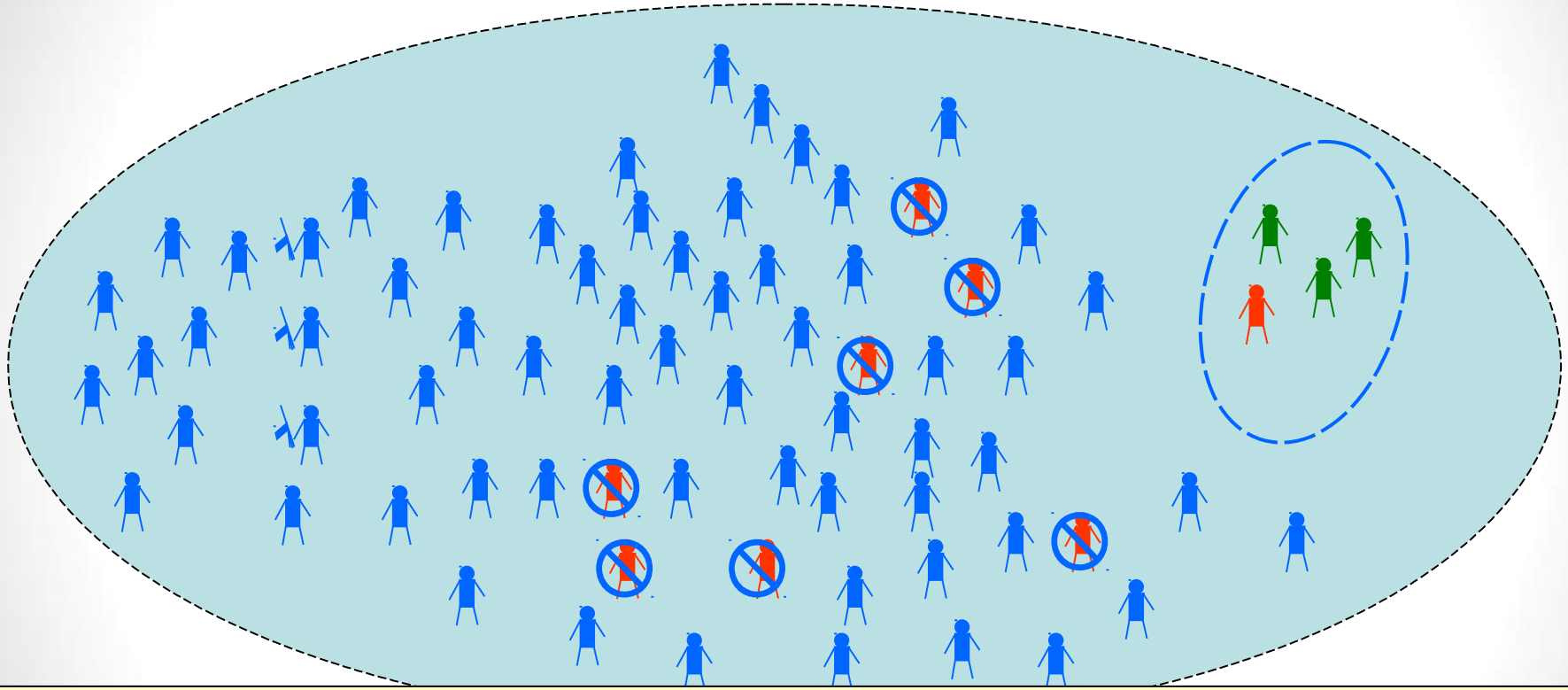
“Competitive Control” 4
(Consolidation)



Consolidation: Security force organizes pro-government population and incentivizes further support for government, via political/economic action. Population are made self-defending. Insurgent political cells eliminated via police work and counterintelligence. Remaining sympathizers contained.

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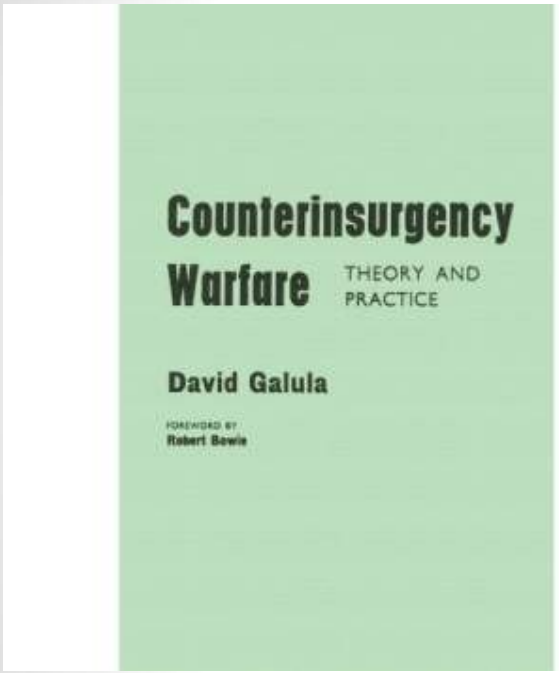
Defining “Victory” in COIN



“A victory is not [just] the **destruction in a given area of the insurgent’s forces and his political organization**. It is that, plus the **permanent isolation of the insurgent from the population**, isolation not enforced upon the population but **maintained by and with the population**.”

David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 1964

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Galula's Eight Steps

In a given local area:

1. Concentrate enough armed forces to destroy or to expel the main body of armed insurgents.
2. Detach for the area sufficient forces to oppose an insurgent's comeback in strength.
3. Establish contact with the population, control its movements in order to cut off its links with the guerrillas.
4. Destroy the local insurgent political organizations.
5. Set up, by means of elections, new provisional local authorities.
6. Test these authorities by assigning them various concrete tasks. Replace the soft and the incompetents, give full support to the active leaders. Organize self-defense units.
7. Group and educate the leaders in a national political movement.

Surge, quarantine, control, isolate, purge, build, test, nationalize, mop up.

Test in one area where conditions are favorable, then spread out ("oil spot").

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Statement of the Obvious # 2: Local Capacity Drives Exit Date

noetic

+ All counterinsurgencies are fought with an eye on post-conflict power structures.
+ Non-indigenous forces will not be there post-conflict.
+ This gives insurgents a major strategic advantage: they can out-wait security forces and emerge after they leave (it also undermines the “Northern Ireland” method)
+ The insurgents’ “home-ground advantage” can only be overcome by developing effective indigenous security/governance institutions

Therefore: Indigenous capacity (governance, security, economics) drives external partners’ exit strategy, and determines (or should determine) exit timeline.

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Remember article 15

"15. Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. **Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is.**"

T.E. Lawrence, "Twenty-Seven Articles", *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917

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The Information Dimension of Counterinsurgency

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Primacy of Influence Operations

+ Control arises from a combination of coercion and consent. The more any government has of one, the less it needs of the other. Counterinsurgents almost always lack the coercive power to control the environment – thus building consent is key.

+ **This makes the population (specifically, the perceptions of *key opinion leaders* in the various communities) the operational CoG in most COIN campaigns**

+ Influence ops (IO plus targeted kinetic ops) are the key tool for generating consent.
  - Commander's intent (pol-mil) *drives*
  - Influence campaign *which drives*

In conventional ops, we use IO to explain what we are doing.
In COIN, we design physical ops to enact our influence campaign.

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Components of the Information Dimension

+ **Intelligence** – tactical, operational, political, economic, strategic
+ **Information collection** – geographical, cultural, economic, governance, infrastructure, agricultural, media landscape, local political and social landscape
+ **Information Ops** – psychological ops, military deception, operational security, computer network operations, electronic warfare
+ **Public Diplomacy** – education, media engagement, visits, legislative liaison, think tank engagement, long-term perception shaping
+ **Public Affairs** – local media, regional media, global media, homeland
+ **Joint Influence Operations** – combination of physical + informational

COIN ops are fundamentally **perception management** operations in which we shape the perceptions of the population, the enemy, our own side and a global audience. This demands a solid, realistic **understanding of the environment** and an ability to **coordinate enormous numbers** of info sources and communication tools.

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Shaping Perceptions

Virtually **every action, message, and decision by a force shapes the opinions of an indigenous population**, to include how coalition personnel treat civilians during cordon and search operations, the accuracy or inaccuracy of aerial bombardment, and the treatment of detainees. **Unity of message is key in this regard**. The panoply of U.S. force actions must be synchronized across the operational battlespace to the extent possible so as not to conflict with statements made in communications **at every level from President to the soldier**, sailor, marine, or airman on the street. Given the inherent difficulty in unifying the American and coalition message across disparate organizations, within and across governments and over time, **these shaping efforts must be designed, wargamed, and conducted as a campaign**. The goal of such a shaping campaign is to foster positive attitudes among the populace for U.S. and allied forces. These attitudes, while not the goal in and of themselves, help decrease anti-coalition behaviors and motivate the population to act in ways that facilitate friendly force operational objectives and the attainment of desired end states.

RAND Corporation, *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation,* February 2007

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Intelligence in Counterinsurgency

+ Qualitatively different from conventional intelligence:
  - Intel collection changes the target we collect on (most info is derived from events – capture, defection, killing leaders – that cause enemy to change)
+ Population-focused, more than enemy-focused
  - Personality targeting (“never kill an insurgent leader until you know who will replace him”)
  - Topographic, economic and governance information, denied area ethnography
  - Human sources: walk-ins and hand-offs, providing alibis
  - Open source intelligence
  - Signals and imagery intelligence for time-sensitive targets
  - Tactical reporting (exploiting routine contacts by thousands of individuals on patrol or engaging with locals)
  - Police intelligence (“special branch”)
  - Counterintelligence and Counter-subversion
+ Senior leader engagement with community leaders (local to national)
  - Talking with the enemy (clandestine diplomacy)
  - Defector and amnesty programs

Working out what is actually happening is the hardest thing in COIN.

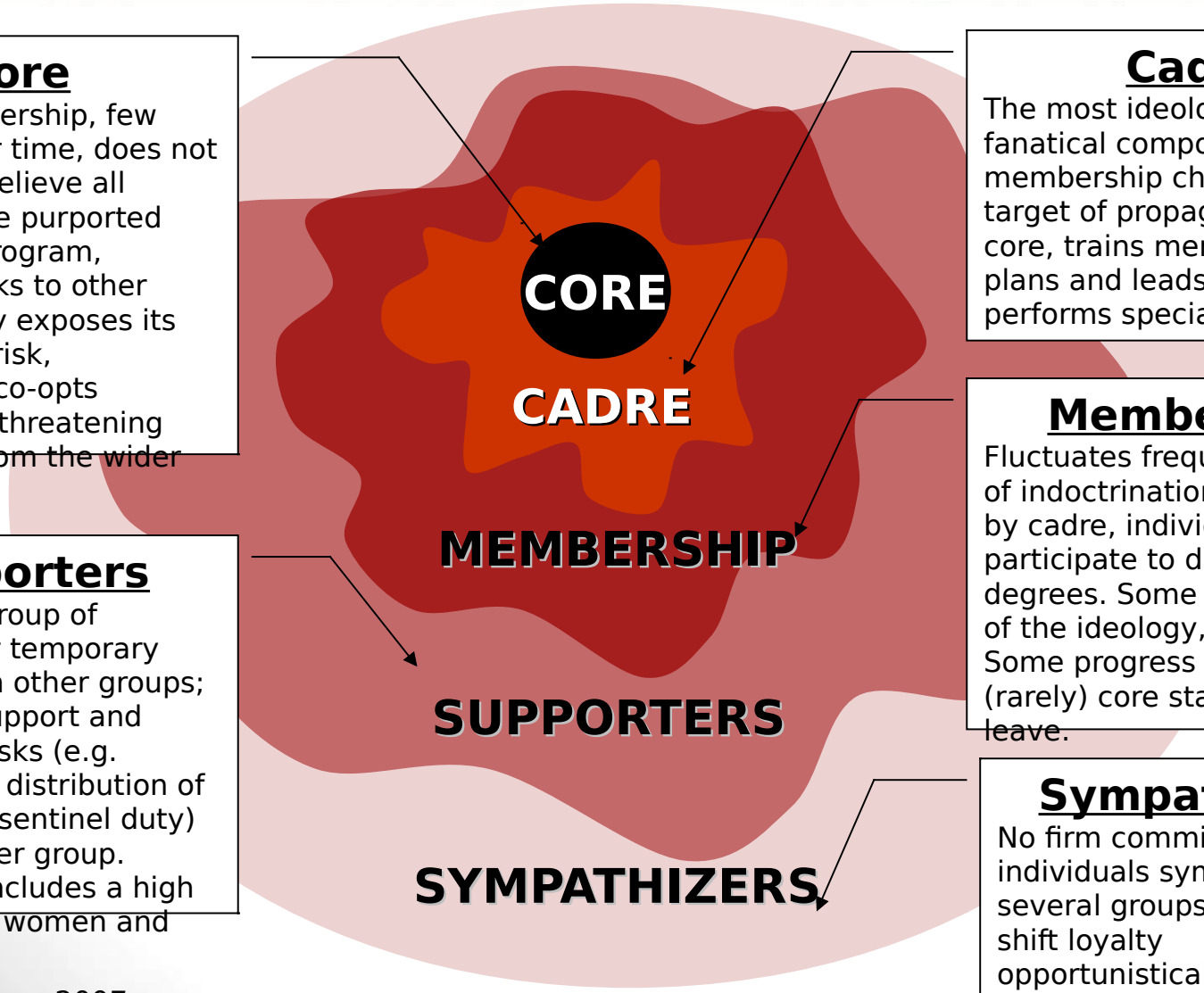
Intel drives ops, but our own ops generate most of the intel we subsequently use. Intel is not a product, served up by higher HQ – we

©

Components of a Clandestine Group_

Core
Stable membership, few changes over time, does not necessarily believe all aspects of the purported ideological program, maintains links to other groups, rarely exposes its members to risk, occasionally co-opts promising or threatening individuals from the wider organization.

Supporters
Fluctuating group of individuals or temporary alliances with other groups; carries out support and facilitation tasks (e.g. courier work, distribution of propaganda, sentinel duty) for the broader group. Sometimes includes a high proportion of women and children.



Cadre
The most ideologically fanatical component, membership changes slowly, target of propaganda from core, trains membership, plans and leads operations, performs specialist functions.

Membership
Fluctuates frequently, target of indoctrination and training by cadre, individuals join and participate to differing degrees. Some absorb more of the ideology, some less. Some progress to cadre or (rarely) core status; most leave.

Sympathizers
No firm commitment, often individuals sympathize with several groups and may shift loyalty opportunistically based on events.

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Mao's "Three Unities"

"…these are political activities, first, as applied to the troops; second, as applied to the people; and, third, as applied to the enemy. The fundamental problems are: first, spiritual unification of officers and men **within the army**; second spiritual unification of the **army and the people**; and, last, **destruction of the unity of the enemy**."

Mao Zedong
On Guerrilla Warfare 1937 Ch. 6

Mao in 1946

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Globalization adds a fourth “unity”

+ The 21st Century equivalent of Mao’s three unities (add globalization, CNN effect; subtract Marxist indoctrination) – this creates four unities:
  - Unity of information activity throughout the force
  - Unity between security forces and the population
  - Unity of IO measures to counter insurgent propaganda
  - Unity of public information messages for the global audience

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“Hearts and Minds”

“We give express charge, that in our marches through the country, there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for **when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner**.”

William Shakespeare,
Henry V, Act III Scene 6

Pop Quiz: *William Shakespeare was a writer of:*

(A)Counterinsurgency Theory

(B) Fiction

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“Hearts and Minds” - Reality

“The answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the Malayan People”

General Sir Gerald Templer,
Director of Operations and High Commissioner for Malaya, 1952

+ Templer did not mean (or say) that we have to “be nice to the population”, or make them like us – though that has become the short-hand version of his remark.
+ What he meant (and his subsequent actions showed) was that success in counterinsurgency rests on popular perception, and that this has
  - an **emotive (“hearts”) component**, and
  - a **cognitive (“minds”) component**.

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Make the people choose

- **Gratitude theory** – "be nice to the people, meet their needs, they will *feel grateful* and stop supporting the insurgents"
  - **DOES NOT WORK**. Enemy simply intimidates population when we are not there. We get lip-service, but they see us as weak and easily manipulated. In time they hate us.
- **Choice theory** – "enable (persuade, coerce, coopt) the population to make an *irrevocable choice* to support us instead of the enemy"
  - **USUALLY WORKS BETTER**. The pop wants to sit on the fence. We have to get them off it and keep them there. This requires persuading the pop, then protecting them, where they live. Cannot do this everywhere, **must** do it where it counts

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The “Hearts” and “Minds” components

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+ **Hearts:** the population must be convinced that our success is in their long-term interests.
+ **Minds:** the population must be convinced that we actually are going to win, and we (or a transition force) will permanently protect their interests.
+ This is about perceived self-interest, not about whether the population likes us. The principal emotive content is respect, not affection.
  - Support based on liking does not survive when the enemy applies fear: intimidation trumps affection.
  - Disappointment, unreliability, failure and defeat are deadly – preserving prestige and popular respect through proven reliability, honoring promises and following through, is key.

The enemy’s two key assets are cultural understanding of the target population, and longevity (he will be around when we leave). Close cooperation with the host nation – to design messages and demonstrate long-term reliability – are critical.

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Enemy IO

+ The insurgent media marketplace
+ Insurgent media formats:
  - Orchestrated protests and demonstrations
  - Mobile phone videos
  - Video CDs
  - SMS messages
  - Rumours/conspiracy theories (Saddam, Hurriya bombs, “Israelis like you”)
  - Internet – but not so much for Iraqi consumption
  - Leaflets – local audience
  - ISI Top 10 on YouTube
+ Dolia airstrike hoax
+ Virtual bleed-out (training, motivation, recruiting, “home-grown” attacks)
+ Insurgent “Own goals” (Afghan and Iraqi examples)
  - Juma Gul
  - Falling out with Anbar sheikhs
  - Huda girl’s school

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Example enemy IO approaches

+ Narrative is key: words to action

+ AQ narratives:
  - We are Sunni, you're Sunni, the Americans are partnering with the Shia, let's fight them together
  - We are the only thing that stands between you and destruction
  - We're leaving, but only temporarily. If you support the Americans while we're gone, we'll come back later and kill you

+ JAM components/narratives:
  - militia, charity, political, criminal, terrorist (Hizballah model)
  - The Government can't protect you; we are all that stands between you and Sunni terrorism
  - The occupiers must leave, we refuse to collaborate with them

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Pathologies in our approach to IO in Iraq

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+ Inability to achieve uniformity of message across the global audience
+ Initial (and too long) avoidance of internet-based IO due to U.S. legal restrictions
+ Focus by PA on “tomorrow’s U.S. headline” rather than long-term improvement in our position in the Iraqi and regional media
+ Overly complex and time-consuming approval and development processes
+ Tendency to score “own goals” by not anticipating the IO effects of our own planned operations
+ Initial (and too long) failure to use local advisers **from the right background** to develop key messages
+ Reliance on “message discipline” rather than telling a common story through words and action
+ Denying errors, or pretending they didn’t happen but changing anyway
+ Not “levelling” with the Iraqi people early
+ Failure to develop Iraqi IO and PA capacity, hence problems creating credible local spokespersons for GOI

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The Economic/Reconstruction Dimension of Counterinsurgency

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Fundamentals of COIN economics

+ **Immediate vs long-term perspectives**
  - Immediate programs are necessary, but have to be set up so as not to undermine long-term objectives
  - Long-term focus is essential in order to convince the population we will stick around
+ **Simultaneity**
  - Cannot wait until perfect security is in place to commence reconstruction activity, but must tailor initial projects to the environment ("when do we hand over to State")
  - Economic and security progress have a synergistic effect
+ **Ownership**
  - Build shared cross-sectarian interests that the population feels it owns (Afghan hydro-electric example, Thai water system example)
  - Avoid creating a "coalition-in-the-loop" dependency relationship
+ **Conditionality**
  - This is not a "pure" development environment, it is *opposed* development
  - Benefits, incentives, disincentives must be made conditional on local support for government initiatives
  - But in a sectarian conflict like Iraq, we must moderate tendencies to use denial of essential services or economic development opportunities to rival groups (Ameriya bank example)
+ **Small local programs**
  - Tailored to local conditions, cheap, recoverable, proliferating over time
  - Better than large, one-size-fits-all, highly publicized projects that create valuable targets for the enemy to attack

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Working with PRTs

- The PRT is an influence tool, not a “pure” aid program
- Get a development adviser in the headquarters
- Focus PRT on specific areas – don’t spread thinly
- Timeliness is critical – population must see *immediate* and *direct* benefit for supporting CF/govt.
- Manage expectations – disappointment kills.
- Selectively apply PRT benefits to areas that support CF; work fringes of these areas to “pitch” community leaders for support
- Develop local compacts with community leaders, with criteria they must meet to receive support – no free lunches
- Apply the “integrated development” model (fix everything in one discrete area, then move on)
- Use reconstruction as the “carrot” and Resource and Population Control (RPC) as the “stick”
- Coordinate using methods like Urban Oil-Spot

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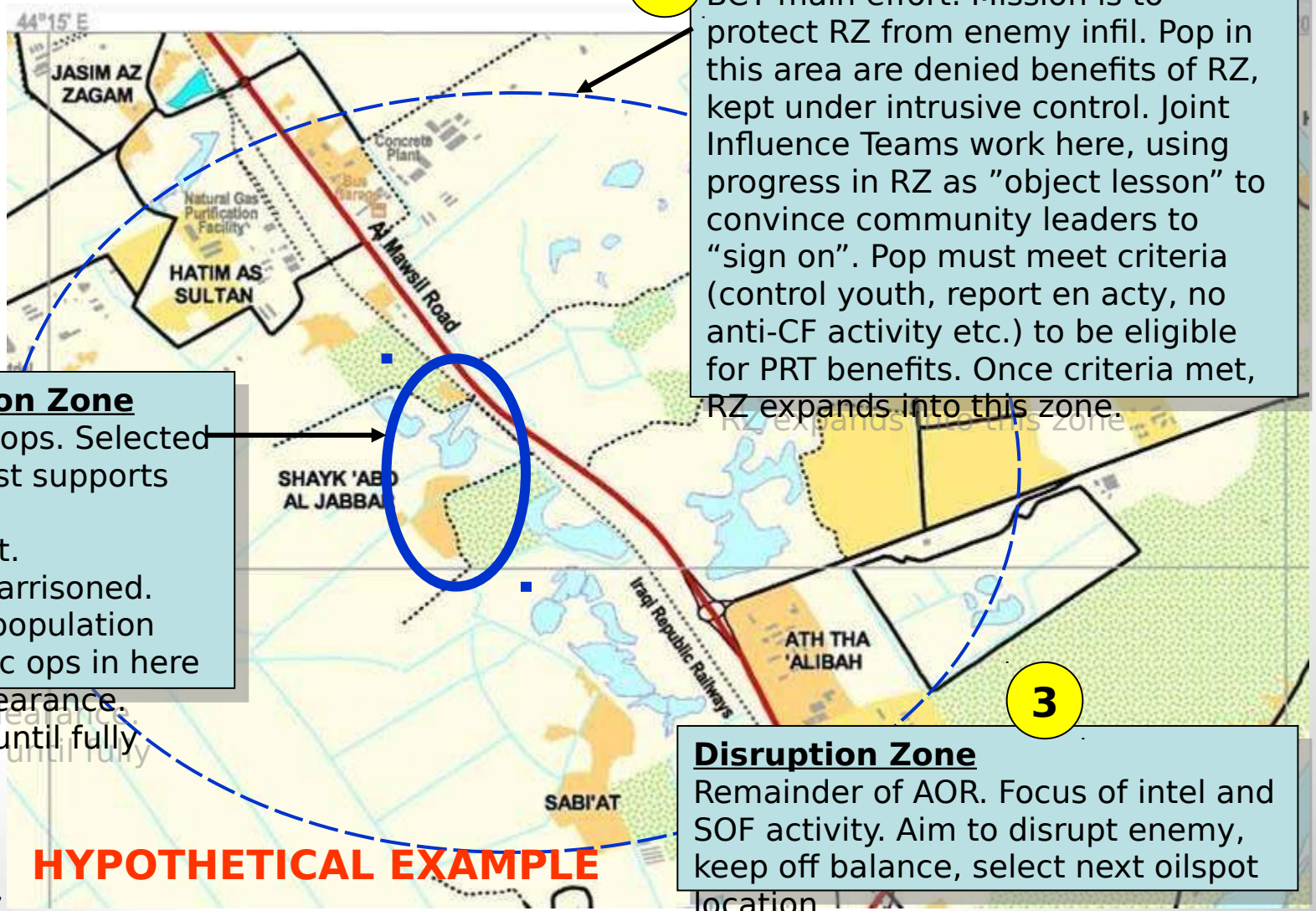
Urban Oilspot

(a traditional TTP, modified for Baghdad)



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Security & Influence Zone

BCT main effort. Mission is to protect RZ from enemy infil. Pop in this area are denied benefits of RZ, kept under intrusive control. Joint Influence Teams work here, using progress in RZ as ”object lesson” to convince community leaders to “sign on”. Pop must meet criteria (control youth, report en acty, no anti-CF activity etc.) to be eligible for PRT benefits. Once criteria met, RZ expands into this zone.

1

Reconstruction Zone

Initial focus of ops. Selected where pop most supports CF.
PRT main effort.
Permanently garrisoned.
Must protect population 24/7. No kinetic ops in here without PRT clearance.
No expansion until fully secure.

3

Disruption Zone

Remainder of AOR. Focus of intel and SOF activity. Aim to disrupt enemy, keep off balance, select next oilspot location.

HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE

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PRT political tasks
(guidance given to EPRTs)

+ The PRT is the political and economic **action arm** of the inter-agency team. Key political tasks include:

  - finding, organizing, empowering, encouraging and preserving moderates;
  - marginalizing extremists;
  - demonstrating the benefits of supporting the government, and the disadvantages of supporting the enemy;
  - bringing economic benefits to the majority Iraqi population;
  - sponsoring community-led activities for reconciliation;
  - building cross-sectarian shared interests within communities;
  - driving down sectarian violence;
  - helping communities coalesce around competent, non-sectarian institutions; and
  - reporting on political developments to higher military headquarters and Embassy Baghdad.

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PRT observations 2007

+ Reconstruction is something of a misnomer. Currently PRTs operate more like expert capacity development teams.
+ Big problems with force protection and mobility – addressing this with EPRTs
+ Tied to province level but this is weakest area of GOI structure – addressing this with provincial budgets, provincial powers
+ Problems with budget execution (central and provincial level)
+ We had a corrosive effect on Iraqi governance structures – beginning to address this
+ Managing expectations – military, civilian, Iraqi – is key
+ Military tendency to equate size with capability, not necessarily applicable to PRTs
+ "Normalization" agenda within USM-I equated to "transition" in MNF-I – MNF-I now changing emphasis, some REOs still catching up

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EPRT observations

+ Major improvement in mobility, access and time “on the ground” – remedying the critical defect of the old PRTs
+ Need to “triage” the environment – set and stick to priorities, “model communities”, don’t bite off more than we can chew
+ C2 structure is critical – EPRT works best as an embedded staff section alongside remaining staff sections in BCT HQ
+ Relationship between Team Leader and BCT commander is fundamental
+ Quality trumps quantity – must demonstrate “value-add” in timely manner
+ Short term vs long term paradox – to convince Iraqis to support us in the short term, we have to convince them we have a long-term plan
+ CERP is heroin – easy development $$$ undercuts our efforts to improve their financial governance, builds dependency, but the “rush” only lasts 90 days
+ Sheikh engagement proving to be critical in many areas where GOI structures limited
+ Expectation management – hope vs experience
+ Metrics currently a “hot issue” of concern – focus on interpretation and judgment
+ Push to make standard PRTs “Divisional EPRTs” – pros and cons
+ Governance transition teams (GTTs) – re-tasking of Cat A Civil affairs teams working well in some areas
+ Governance centers – “GOI FOB” – as passive force protection measure
+ Local Security Forces – funding model and GOI opposition are key challenges; could transform correlation of forces if these challenges are

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Concluding thoughts

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To sum up....

+ Counterinsurgency is a form of counter-warfare designed to suppress insurrection
+ It has no fixed or standard techniques, but it does exhibit enduring fundamentals:
  - Control of population, resources and terrain
  - Primacy of political strategy
  - Resource-intensiveness
  - Inherently joint and interagency
  - Centrality of local support based on mobilizing and controlling population
  - Population-centric methods
  - Information, Political, Economic and Security pillars

First understand the environment, in detail and in its own terms, then diagnose the drivers and key characteristics of the insurgency and develop tailored approaches to counter each stage of the insurgent system.

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Questions to consider:

- Are the Iraqis in the coalition or out of it?
- Do the fundamentals of “classical” (1960s) counterinsurgency still adequately cover the reality of what is happening in Iraq?
- What does this tell us about the mission environment for future counterinsurgencies, and how to prepare for them?

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Q & A

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Backup

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Get out and walk – move mounted, work dismounted

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+ HMMWV Insulates us, limits situational awareness
+ Enemy have used the IED to isolate us from the population
+ Makes us predictable – we move slowly on set routes
+ Drastically reduces dismount numbers (2-3)
+ An underbelly attack IED, or EFP, will blow right through it like a breeze anyway
+ OK for getting to a patrol AO, or for overwatch, heavy equip carriage & communications.
+ Not a squad car.

Stop by, don't drive by. Patrol on foot, or take a real AFV.

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Operate for intelligence “breaks” – then exploit them ruthlessly

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+ Intelligence drives ops, but ops generate the intel that makes the next cycle of operations possible
+ Tactical reporting, from civ and mil agencies, is key
+ Forward-deploy analytical capacity as far as possible
+ Presence alongside the people in the AOR turns on a fire-hose of tips: must be prepared for this
+ Learn how to recognize and exploit a “break” into the enemy network

Most actionable intelligence will come from sigint, tactical reporting, follow-up of IED and sniper attacks, walk-ins and detainee interrogation. Work with what we have.

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Every unit is a MiTT

+ JSSs and COPs put coalition and Iraqi forces together throughout the battlespace
+ MiTTs can't be everywhere – units must work with them to enforce standards, enable ISF performance, and monitor for abuses or inefficiencies
+ Any coalition unit working with ISF will be studied, emulated and copied – for better or worse
+ Never operate unilaterally unless absolutely

Regardless of mission, any coalition unit operating alongside ISF has a mentoring, training and example-setting role.

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Never leave home without an Iraqi

+ We lack linguists, SA, “feel” for what is normal/abnormal
+ ISF have all these things, but lack combat power
+ Together, working with the local people, we can be an extremely powerful combination; working unilaterally we can be defeated piecemeal
+ Never op without an ISF presence at lowest feasible level
+ There will be security breaches. This is a cost of doing business; the benefits outweigh the risks in most cases.
+ Plan, sequence and *sell* operations together from the start.

Units should build a genuine, field-based partnership with local ISF units – always move, live, work and fight together.

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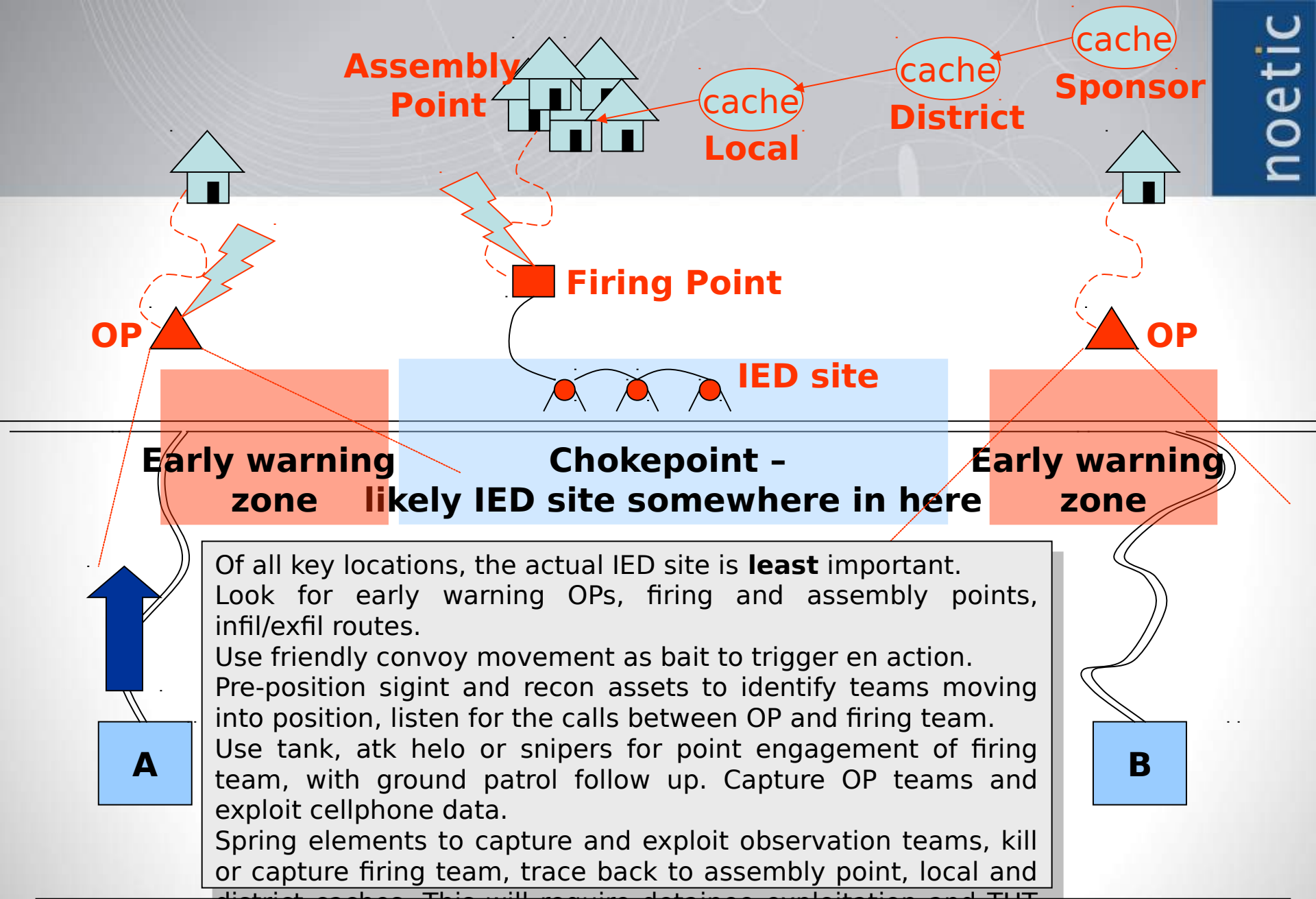

Of all key locations, the actual IED site is **least** important.
Look for early warning OPs, firing and assembly points, infil/exfil routes.
Use friendly convoy movement as bait to trigger en action.
Pre-position sigint and recon assets to identify teams moving into position, listen for the calls between OP and firing team.
Use tank, atk helo or snipers for point engagement of firing team, with ground patrol follow up. Capture OP teams and exploit cellphone data.
Spring elements to capture and exploit observation teams, kill or capture firing team, trace back to assembly point, local and district caches. This will require detainee exploitation and TUT

Look beyond the IED – get the network that placed it.

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Be first with the truth

+ PAOs and IO organizations can control the message space and set general themes
+ But the man/woman on the spot has a thousand daily interactions with Iraqis, and with the global audience – what soldiers do speaks louder than what PAOs say
+ Communicate key messages down to individual level
+ Speed is critical – minutes and hours matter
+ Win the local (Arabic/Iraqi) audience first – the US/global audience will follow

Tell the truth, stay in your lane, get the message out fast. Never lie, and never allow an enemy lie to stand unchallenged.

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Give the people *justice* and *honor*

+ We talk about democracy and human rights. Iraqis talk about justice and honor.
+ Treating the people with dignity and respect wins friends and discredits enemies – but it must be genuine, not patronizing.
+ Remember Iraqis don't see the fine distinctions between us that we see – we are all tarred with the same brush
+ This is probably your first or second time in your exact AOR. You are the 10th or 11th CF unit they have seen.
+ Act quickly and publicly to deal with complaints/abuses.

Second only to security, bringing justice to the people and restoring their honor is the key task.

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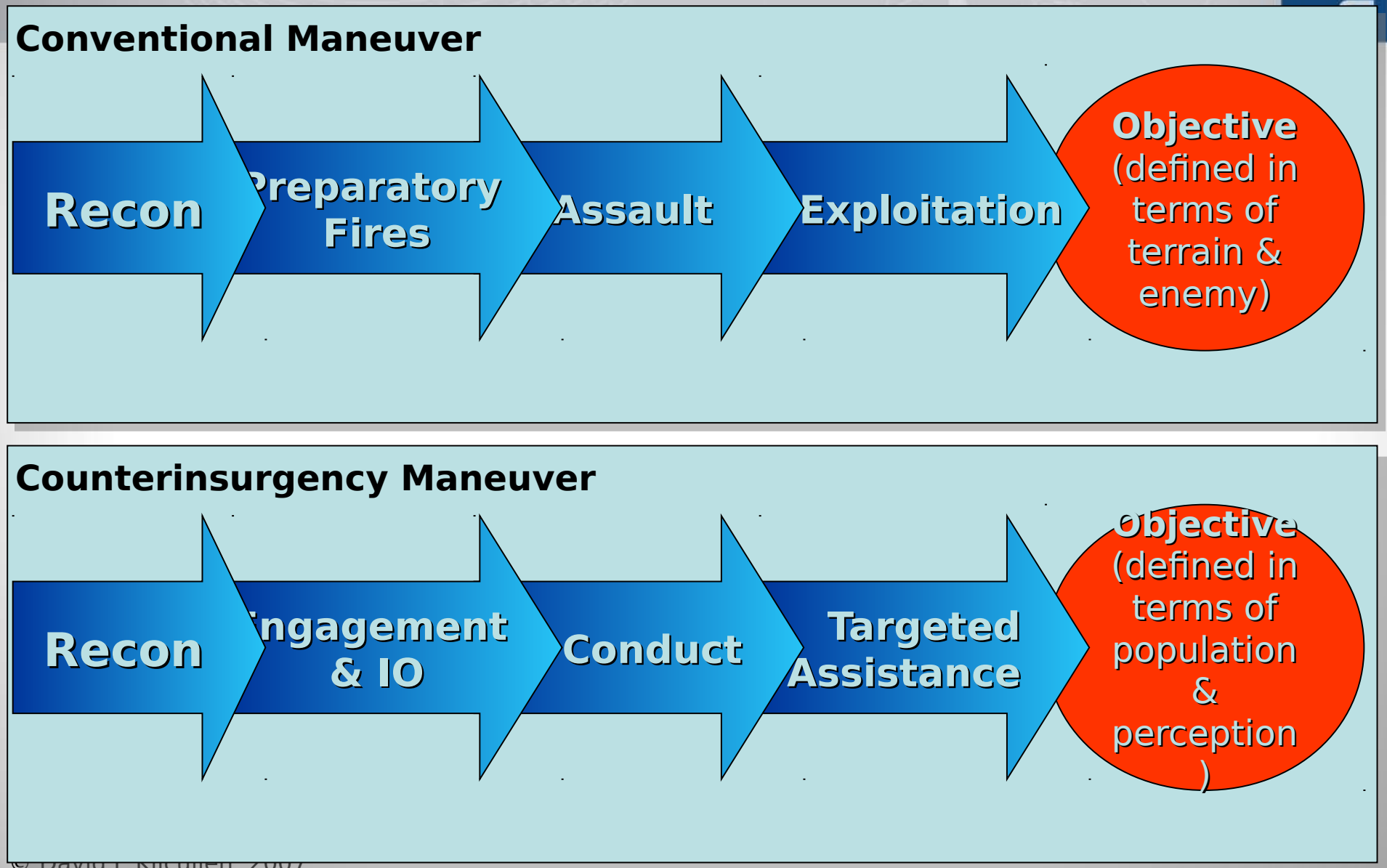
Maneuver in COIN

(how “influence ops” works in practice)



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Foot Patrolling

(Urban areas)

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+ Multiple small patrols (4 to 6 man teams) working 1-200 yards apart, in one area
+ Should be close enough to “pile on” in the event of an incident, distant enough not to become one target
+ Each is too small to be a valuable target, and enemy is never sure where all teams are – this has a deterrent effect
+ Overt and covert OPs, raid towers, sniper pairs provide persistent overwatch
+ In event of an incident, on-scene commander establishes incident control point and coordinates deployment of other teams
+ Satellite patrols orbit larger teams and static sites
+ Vehicles provide overwatch, base of fire, carry heavy equipment, provide snap VCPs or outer cordon, or used for deception
+ Mix of foot and vehicle patrols keeps enemy off-balance

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Counterinsurgency Vignette

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Baghdad, March 2007

Suaada Saadoun with Kurdish and American soldiers on Tuesday after they stopped two Shiite men who had tried to evict her from her home on false premises.

(*New York Times* 30 March 2007)

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The two men told Ms. Saadoun they had been authorized by the Ministry of Finance to repossess the home on behalf of the Iraqi government. Ms. Saadoun said she knew the papers they showed her were fake. They had tried the same thing the previous week.

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The two Shiite men were stopped at a checkpoint. One of them, Abbas Radhi, right, said he and his companion had done nothing wrong, but the eviction papers they held were for another neighborhood.

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The next day, Ms. Saadoun was shot in a market within spitting distance of the checkpoint... One of the eight bullets that killed her lay in a wet patch of dirt and cement. Grieving women, including one of Ms. Saadoun’s daughters, after hearing of her death. "I told you, 'Don't go out, they'll kill you,'" one daughter cried out.

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Ms. Saadoun's granddaughters and the rest of the family have left the neighborhood. The house is now empty.

(All photos in this series © Ashley Gilbertson for the *New York Times,* 2007)

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Questions to consider

1. What were the political and influence effects of this series of events?
2. Could the incident, and its aftermath, have been handled differently? If so, how?
3. What BCT or PRT assets could have been applied here?
4. How do you secure the population when you can’t be everywhere at once?
5. What follow up maneuvers might be used to recover from this?

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Operation Arcadia 2

Grand Council meeting Chartering North Babil Tribal Council PJCC, Hillah

Supported Effect: Connect GOI to the Populace

Task:

- Nonsectarian Government of Iraq led organization established to represent the populations in North Babil. Sheiks are accountable for their tribal lands based on an agreement signed with GOI. Tribes publicly state non-support for terrorism and illegal groups. Tribes publicly state support for reconciliation, reconstruction of Iraqi infrastructure, and support for the government of Iraq.

Political Impact:

Forces Province to recognize North Babil, encourages taking ownership. Tribal leaders may now be held responsible for their areas in an unofficial capacity. Regional program projected to be implemented at a national level upon established success. Will provide Sunni leadership inroads to GOI frequently viewed as inaccessible due to sectarian issues.

Issues - Continued sectarianism will undermine legitimacy and support, must have CF "honest broker" oversight.

GOI Officials Signing:

Dr. Fa'al Naam'a	National Reconciliation coordinator
Governor Salem Salah Medhi	Babil Governor
Major General Oothman	8th Division Commander
Lieutenant General Qais	Babil IP Chief
COL Garrett	4th BCT Commander
Mohammed Ali Hussein	Babil PC Chairman

Commanders Intent:

Purpose: Connect populace to GOI
Method: Establish tribal council officially sanctioned by GOI
Endstate: Representation connecting populace though tribal group to civic councils, through tribal council to Provincial and GOI

Signatories-
162 Sheiks signed the Charter

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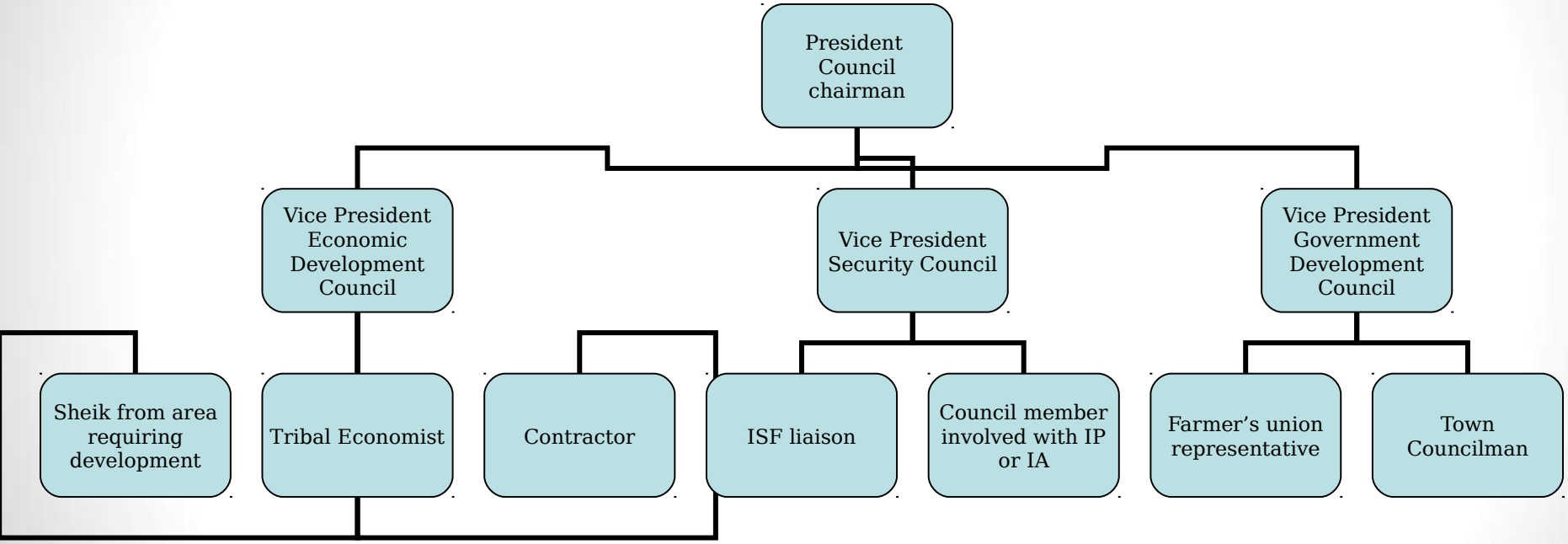
Operation Arcadia 2 - Formation of Subcommittees under the vice presidents



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Op Arcadia 2 – signing ceremony

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